



Some of the 141 golfers wait their turn on No. 10 while others practice on the putting green at Meadowbrook Golf Course in the first round of the Forth Worth Junior Golf Association's Boys City Junior Golf Championship. The four-day tournament resumes Tuesday with the lower scorers from Meadowbrook going to River Crest Country Club. There were 458 who had registered for the tournament that also had players at Z Boaz and Sycamore Creek courses.

Cleburne junior takes first-round lead by a shot

For someone who finished third in the Second Flight last year, Dillon Vaughn, 16, of Cleburne made a significant step forward after the opening round of the FWJGA's Boys City Junior Golf Championship at Meadowbrook Golf Course on a hot, humid Monday. Vaughn carded a 1-under-par 70 to nudge into the lead by one shot lead over four other players, three of whom are from Mansfield. Tying at 71 were Andre Garcia, 15, of Mansfield, Gates Lopez, 17, of Fort Worth, Luke Neeley, 15, of Mansfield, and Ryan Pawlowski, 18, of Mansfield. Chris Gentry, 17, an Arlington Heights player was alone at 72, with Cain Rocha, 15, of Hurst and Zeb Littlefield, 17 of Millsap another shot behind.

Vaughn started fast, dipping to 3-under through five holes, but a shank on the short par-4 eighth hole resulted in a double-bogey to somewhat stall his charge. Nevertheless, he will head the Division I field as it heads to River Crest Country Club for Tuesday's second round. The Meadowbrook field was divided into two divisions and Division II will play Tuesday at Ridgela Country Club's North Course.

Defending champion Kolton Crawford got off to a slow start with a 4-over 75. But he didn't jump out of starting blocks last year either after opening with a 75. "I didn't have a birdie all day and had one ball out of bounds (on the par 4, No. 9)," Crawford said of Monday's round. "And I hit only eight greens...I didn't hit it very good today."

At least, he said the 75 didn't take him out of the chase and still is confident because he had been playing "pretty well" coming into the tournament.

Vaughn, who has been working on his game and undergoing "major swing changes," was somewhat surprised his 70 held up for the first-round lead. He figured someone would dip to at least a 68 over the relatively short (6,363 yards) course. But a thick rough was one reason that kept scores higher than expected.

Vaughn, the District 8-4A champ, returned from an AJGA tournament in San Antonio on July 12-16 and failed to make the cut. But on Monday, he saw better results second, third and fifth holes before stumbling on the 350-yard No. 8. On the back nine, he bogeyed the 10th, birdied the 14th and finished with a chip-in birdie on the 18th from the front left edge of the green.

"I hit the ball pretty good (overall) today, but I hit a few stray shots" the Joshua High School student said. "I've really worked hard on my game since last year. I've been kind of inconsistent this summer." He said adjusting to the swing changes, though, has been difficult, but he's beginning to see the results. After winning the district title, he missed going to the state championship by two shots.

Lopez, who attends Fossil Ridge High School, described his round as "up and down all day." He offset four birdies with four bogeys. He was 2-under through eight holes, but three-putted the ninth from about five feet for his second bogey on the front. On the back nine, he said "I hit it all over the place" as he carded one birdie and two bogeys. Yet, Lopez said "I left some shots out there, so I'll make them up (Tuesday)."

Garcia, another Mansfield High player, had a more consistent round as he had two birdies and two bogeys. The slight-built 15-year-old hit the dog-left left 482-yard par-5 fourth hole in two, with his 3-wood second finishing about 20 feet from the hole. He two-putted for his only birdie on the front. He bogeyed the ninth, but dipped to 1-under for the day with a birdie on the par-5 13th. He made a good save for par on the 16th and followed that with a good bogey save on the 17th. "I blocked a 4-iron and tried to hit a flop shot (from the rough), but it came up short. I chipped to about four feet and made that for my bogey."

Garcia said he's been having a pretty good summer in tournaments and tied for ninth along with Crawford at an AJGA tournament at Southern Oaks in June.

Neeley is home-schooled, but he knows many of the contenders quite well since most of the Mansfield golfers play at Walnut Creek Country Club. The 71 is his lowest tournament score of the year, he said, thanks in part to "playing conservatively off the tee" to keep the ball in the fairways. That led to his hitting "13 or 14 greens."

"I had a couple of errant tee shots, but I played pretty solid. I hit some good iron shots," he said. One of his errant tee shots cost him a bogey on the 12th hole, but birdies on the 10th and 14th and a good up-and-down save for par on the 18th gave him a 1-under 34 on the back. He made the turn at 1-over after bogeying the 8th.

The boys who began at Z Boaz were to be divided into 16-person flights and will begin single-elimination match play Tuesday at either Diamond Oaks C.C. or Glen Garden G&CC, depending on their first-round scores. The Sycamore Creek boys will remain there and were to be flighted in 8-person flights and will begin single-elimination play Tuesday.